this issue. Some other neighbouring countries have officially expressed concern over missile and nuclear weapon proliferation in the region and reiterated their commitment to the Comprehensive Test Bsin Treaty (CTBT).

The three tests conducted on 11 May were with a fission device with a yield of 12 kilo tonnes (kT), a thermonuclear device with a yield of about 43 kT and a sub-kilo tonne device.

India now has a credible nuclear deterrent and these tests provide an assurance to the Indian people that Government would attach the highest priority to addressing India's security concerns.

Offer made by American Special Envoy on Nuclear Cooperation

190. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a)whether during the recent visit of the US-team in April this year, following the Pak-test of Ghauri-missile, the American special envoy had indicated that the US was open to the idea of revival of nuclear cooperation for peaceful purposes; and

(b)if so, what was the precise stand taken by the US team and what headway has since been made in that direction for reviving such "cooperation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) and (b) India and the United States have been engaged in a wide-ranging dialogue on bilateral, regional and global issues intended to broaden and deepen our mutually beneficial relations and identify areas of cooperation. Cooperation in some areas of science and technology including nuclear power generation have been discussed in a preliminary way as part of this wise-ranging dialogue. Nuclear cooperation, however, did not come up for discussion duping the special envoy's visit in April, 1998.

Response to UN Secretary-General efforts to establish a Multipolar World

191. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a)whether India has extended full support to UN Secretary-General in his efforts in establishing a multi-polar world to bring about global peace and development; and

(b)if so, what specific steps have been taken by him in that direction, and Government's response thereto during the past six months?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY'OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) and (b) The UN Secretary-General has proposed a reforms package to revitalise the UN. The Government has welcomed the UN Secretary-General's efforts in this direction and is actively participating in the discussions underway in the General Assembly on these proposals with the objective of making the UN more responsive to the concerns of the majority of its member countries viz. the developing countries.

Racket in Issuance of Passport

192. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a)whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem appearing in the Express Newsline section of the Indian Express dated 9th April, 1998, under the caption 'Psst...Want a Passport? Rs. 17000 please'; and

(b)if so, the details in this regard and Government's reaction to the touts' operation and alleged involvement of the policemen and the passport office employees in offering the passport to anyone without any verification and proper documents but for a price?